On the Pacific

On Board the Barque Crosby During the
Months of April and part of May. 1838

To My Beloved Sister Georgiana His Letters have
ever been Respectfully Dedicated!!!
Addressed To Mary

In my last communication from Panama to Stephen I gave him a perfect account of my passage across that Isthmus, but on account of having very little time and having a gentle hint from the Land Lord, where I slept that I was burning most to remain to show for that Climate. There were many things which I passed over very rapidly. I may perhaps review the whole of my narrative from the time of entering Chagres Harbour, to the closing of this correspondence to You. My last letter to Father was closed just as we were entering that harbour. We came to anchor not about three miles from the landing precisely at twelve M on Sunday. There was now great interest manifested to get on land as soon as possible and finding secure a cheap and speedy passage in the several the Steamers Georgia and Cherokee were momentarily expected from New York which would increase the number of passengers to go up at one time, to about thirteen hundred.

Some in their restless anxiety took small boats and paid one dollar to be set on shore, while others waited patiently for the steamer Ozier, which was to land us at the expence of the U.S. As soon as we drop't anchor the Capt. Sent an express for the Ozier to come out and take us off as expititiously as possable, but on account of her boilers being bad. it was 3 o'clock before she made her appearance and it was past eight before all landed. Now for a few words about Chagres, which has been said and much written about this place familiarly known as the "grave of the European". I will remark in the first place that it is not half so bad as I had anticipated or as I had been taught to belein from published accounts of it. As we enter the mouth of the river. The first thing that greets our view is the old Spanish fort. Standing upon a high bluff to the right. This old fort was built at the time of the conquest of Darien by the Spaniards but its loneliness and its delapidated walls are fit emblems of the decline of the Spanish power. Further up the river on the west side is a small level plain. upon which is built the Native Village. back of this the land rises gradually to quite an elivation. The native huts are built of the rudest materials and in the rudest manner.

having four holes driven into the ground. The roof is then brought from these holes to a point in the centre at the top. and then is thatched with Palm leaves or such other material as can be easily procured. This thatch is piled on till it is from twelve inches in thickness, and looks not unlike a stack of hay. The walls of the hut is then composed of small poles driven in to the ground close together, and lashed with withes to a pole which runs from corner to corner of the top. It is then made tight by being plastered over with a specie of plaster made of cow manure. The ground is used for the floor and a dry hide for their seats, being spread upon the ground. This doubtless makes a very comfortable habitation for this Climate. Their children of both sexes under the age of 12 or 14 years, go in a indecent state of nudity. Their Pigs, Cattle and in fact all of their animals are most miserably poor. On the opposite side of the River the Americans have commenced their City and which indeed looks a little more like Civilization. They have here some 18 or 20 buildings, all of which are used for Hotels and Liquor shops. None of them being larger than a Common Wood-shed in New England. The water here is most horribly poor

If they could get good water here I have no doubt but that this is as healthy place as there is on the Thames. I now come to my passage up the River. After they all had got safely landed, then commenced the rush for canoes and boats to get up to Georgia, About this time the Cherokee made her appearance in the harbour and the Georgia came in I was told 24 hours afterwards. At about midnight all had got under way at price for passage ranging from £6 to £16. We now proceeded at a moderate speed, with the Silver moon shining forth in all her resplendent glory: this together with the beauty of the foliage made it one of the most grand and picturesque scenes which the imagination could frame, As our simple mates rowed us quietly along, I sat and gazed in silent admiration upon this grand and beautiful scene. This smooth and silver-like River — undisturbed save by an occasional plunge of a huge Alligator and the quick dash of the Osprey — meandering its course through a dense growth of the most luxuriant vegitation — presented to the mind one of those scenes so beautifully depicted in the fairy tales of the Arabian Knights — Noworks banks are covered with Vines of the every Species — and bushes teeming with the most splendid blossoms and also

hang in rich festoons the most delicious fruits, again the Palm the Cocoa and the bread fruit are seen loaded to the earth, there in the distance on a more elivated position the most gigantic trees of the forests are towering far above every thing around, Vines which have slowly crept to their very top again hanging in rich splendor half way back to their Mother earth, presenting to the Enthusiastic admirer one of the most splendid arbors on the face of the earth under which a Queen might recline and never be weary. It was now becoming day light and the feathered tribes are just awakeing from their pleasant dreams — for what else could they have — and are pouring forth their varied notes of praise to the great Author of all good for his kind protecting Care — Here we saw every specie of birds which visit our section of the Country in the Summer. besides others which are never seen in that section, and which are clothed in the most varied Colors — and hue — Which the beautiful tints of the Rainbow would in vain try to rival. We had now got some twenty miles of the Vines which we had found of a dirty muddy nature without the least current, undrinkable. Here the natives made signs of bathing for the purpose testing their weary frames. and to look a little

breakfast. At this place there is a kind of a native village. and there is one American here who appears to be a Counterfeit Yankee that has set himself down here for the purpose of providing a little refreshment to those who are so unfortunate as to be obliged to partake of his miserable stuff. there be sold a very small cup of coffee for a dime. a quarter of a very poor pie for a dime - and so on. Food could be purchased from here to Panama for less than a dime however small it might be. Here we found for the first time the Isthmus ant. which the weary traveller finds a constant source of annoyance all of the way through to Panama. We could not sit down on the bank of the river without being covered with them and many of us can testify to their having very sharp teeth. In many places from here to Panama I saw their houses and paths about four inches wide worn as distinctly as any sheep path in a thick pasture. these paths conduct from one house to the other. thence to some green tree. which they strip entirely of its leaves which they convey to their nests for food - I saw them at work one morning as early as four o'clock, whether they work all night or not is more than I know, but should think quite probable if the natives were as industrious as these ants. the Isthmus would be in a better

Condition for travelling than it now is. The
wise men did indeed choose a very industrious
animal to contrast the sluggard with, when he
pointed him to this little insect for wisdom.
The natives having finished their frugal meal of rice,
which by the way appear to be the staple of their subsistance
signified their readiness to proceed. When we again entered
our canoes and moved slowly up the river. We now
began to find the water gradually growing a slow
current and the river becoming a little narrower
and the banks higher. The sky today was overcast
with many flitting clouds and the heat moderate.
We were so much interested with the thousand and
one things which attracted our attention, that we
took but little notice of our progress. During the
the day we saw Alligators, Monkeys, Parrots and an
indescribable number of Lizzards. One specie
called the Iguana which is some two feet in length
and very ugly. Some of them were lazying stretched
out on the limbs of large trees while others were
scrambling rapidly up the steep banks to hide
themselves from the face of man. The natives eat
this species and consider them a rare dish.
We to night encamped at a Hacendia fifteen miles
below Gorgona. Here was an American, keeping
a kind of a Restaurator where he deals out his
poisonous liquors for a dime for about a little full

Some wraft their blankets about them and made a bed of mother Earth with the Silver Moon and twinkling Stars keeping silent vigil around their Romantic bed, while others slept in the Canoes to protect the baggage, — At about one the next morning the restless spirit of the American could no longer be quell'd. Some had awoke and they sent up a shout which brought all quickly to their feet; there was now a rush into the Canoes and in a few minuets all were under way in high glee. The river had now become so narrow and rapid that they were obliged to propell the Canoes with setting poles and in many places we were obliged to get out and walk around the Sand bars, which were very numerous on account of the many angular turns in the river. This is indeed the most remarkable river in the world. It winds itself through a rather soft and sandy kind of soil, which has been worn by its Rapid Current into a Serpantine Course which makes the distance almost double of that which it would otherwise be were it straight, in one place we cut off one point of land by walking only about 50 rods, while it was upwards of one Mile around with the boats, — Upon within Six or eight miles of Corpona the natives set about two thirds of us on shore to go overland as it would save us some time and about

three or four miles travel, and that we should get there long before they could with the boats, About eleven o'clock we or so as entered the woods without guide or pilot. We found for the first two or three miles a very fine beaten trail. This soon brought us into a piece of fallen trees, where the R.R. is to pass and which had lately been burnt over. Here every vestige of the trail was lost, after wandering about over this burnt patch for an hour or more we found a slight path, that turned very abruptly to our left. We entered this, but after following it for a few rods it run out, the heat was suffocating, and our thirst intense. In wandering about some one came upon a small stream of water. The cry of water soon brought us all together, into which we dove like so many half-famished beasts, there we sat and slaked our thirsty souls and fully discussed the best course to pursue. When it was resolved to follow this stream to its mouth upon this we started, and after following its meandering course for over three long hours we came in sight of the Chagres River. This caused a shout of three good hearty cheers. Coming to a native hut. What was our surprise to find ourselves three miles below

Gorgona! this caused a murmur of indignation as we had walked no fewer than ten miles to get here. After laying under the shade of a large tree for something like an hour, we moved on, and arrived in Gorgona at six behind all the boats. This was the hardest day we had in crossing the Isthmus — Here we found good lodgings at the American Hotel. Gorgona is the prettiest place upon the I. It contains about three or four hundred inhabitants. Their suits are the same as those at Chagres. In the Morning, having put our baggage in charge of Messrs Reynolds & Egg's transportation line at $7.00 per Cwt, we started with the determination of walking only 13 miles to the half way station that day. On this route we saw many things to amuse us and keep us from getting wearisome. Of all things which more particularly attracted my attention, was that of a Stout Negro, with a large tool chest upon his back. He had a band of a frame fixed to his back, and to this he had this large chest lightly strapped. The demensions of this chest were 4 feet long by 18 inches wide and 20 inches high. Weighing probably 300 lbs. The poor fellow left Gorgona at the same time we did, but we all came to the Conclusion that he would never survive the effort; but after walking in this Co for about one mile he began to walk

faster than we wanted to go. We saw no more of him until we got to the half-way S— where we found our hero sitting beside his heavy burden very much at his ease— In a few minutes some one kindly assisted him in getting it upon his back. When he gave the shout of Ca bah boo. and we saw him no more. We to night took lodgings upon a cot bed with nothing but a pillow stuffed with long grass and one blanket, for this together with a very poor breakfast we paid $1,25 apiece. And left very early with a determination to get through before the heat of the day— When within 10 miles of the City we came upon the old Spanish paved Road. This road is in a remarkable good state of preservation being in many instances abandoned by the natives as their animals are used without shoes. It is built of square flat stones about twelve inches square with those of the same kind set up at the sides to keep it from falling to pieces. It is about 10 feet wide and wholly unfit for a carriage. Not a carriage of any description was seen anywhere upon the Isthmus. Every thing is transported upon back mules and oxen. I saw two very fatty oxen that came from C— with packs weighing upwards of three hundred lbs. Some thing new for me at least—

We arrived in the far-famed City of Panama on Thursday at 11 o'clk, Making out about eighty hours from Colegnes or only twelve days from New York. Here we enter the City from the North-east direction over a long sandy plain of some two miles. On our right near the Springs many of the natives reside who are principally engaged in washing. They hang their clothes upon the bushes and they indeed look remarkably white. All the water which supplies the City is conveyed from these Springs in Cars upon pack mules. These jars hold about four gallons and sells for a dime per jar. One pack Mule bears four of them and the simple native upon his. As we enter the City, we come upon quite a long paved street with large three story buildings outside of the walls. In the basement of these buildings, every room in the front is used for a Liquor Shop without one exception. As we wend our way up this street we come to the Public Square outside of the walls. Here Stone Seats are constructed for the weary traveller to rest his jaded limbs before entering the City. Here Mr Rolfe and myself who had got ahead of the rest of our party waited for their arrival. The first building we [illegible] after passing through the gate is a Cathedral, and in fact almost

Every second building throughout the City is either a Cathedral or a Convent.
The short space of time which we had in Panama was insufficient for me to make such observations as I was desirous of making But notwithstanding I had an opportunity of spending a few moments at one of their Churches which they had been holding Throughout the week. At the time that I was in the old Priest was engaged in washing the feet of the poor. This is indeed a very solemn ceremony for that poor old people. The way of performing this foolish ceremony is by gathering together all the poor, lame, blind and the halt, and arranging them on benches on one side of the house. While the congregation kneel back of them on the floor as they no pews as our Churches have. The old Priest now stripes himself and then girds himself with a linen towel, and assisted by two younger Students probably who carry the Silver Wash bowl filled with holy water. He begins by taking a little water in his hand and just rubs it on to the foot of the poor fellow, then wipes it with the towel, and finishes by kissing the foot he has washed. Of course he would kiss no other place. After this ceremony is over with they have a short Sermon and close the exercises.

Here I must confess that I heard one of the best Orators, that I ever saw in a pulpit tho although I could not understand his language, Yet his tone was as musical as the organ, and his gestures without a fault— Yet was from New Orleans I was told. The Sunday previous was what they call Palm Sunday, In which I was told they imitated Christs entry in Jerusalem by placing his Image upon an old Colt and parading it through the Streets while the Simple natives Strewed Palm branches in his way— and the Americans laughed at their folly— I cannot within this limited Space give You a full discription of their Cathedrals and Manner of worship— nor would it be necessary since they probably have the same the World over Having their full quota of Images and ever burning Candles with their thousand-and-one foolish Ceremonies— We found the City Crowded to overflowing with California Emigrants— Many of them had been here upwards of Six Weeks!! awaiting Steamers round the Horn. Three of which came in to Panama harbour but two or three days previous to our arival here— namely The Sarah Sands, Isthmus, Gold-Hunter and Carolina— The passengers for these had been here for weeks Some of them since the last of January! And Some of them had their indignation thoroughly

aroused Swearing Vengence upon those agts in New York who forwarded them to Panama without any possible means of getting them through to California. They had waited so long for these Steamers that many had had sold their tickets to Speculators and left on Sailing Vessels. When these Steamers made their appearance these tickets went up to the highest prices. Steerage tickets actually sold for $400 and many Counterfeit tickets were in the market hence the danger of purchasing a second handed ticket. In this Emergency the only alternative was to take a Sailing Vessel or remain in Panama. The former I resolved to adopt and accordingly took passage upon the Barque Creole which was to leave on the following day. A few reflections will now serve to close my Narration of crossing the Isthmus To a person who is about to perform this journey I would say. In the first place never be in the least hurry to get through to Panama. Before leaving home prepare Yourself with such provisions well packed as would keep while crossing the Atlantic, Such as good Sausages beef's tongues well dried Crackers and many other edibles that the good New England women know how to prepare. Enough to last You one week if You do not eat it all on the I. You will want it before You get across the Pacific. and also with Coffee and tea for the same time.

I have thought Coffee boiled down very Strong or the extract of Coffee well bottled would be the very best thing a person could have before leaving the Steamer get one of the gentlemanly Stewards to make You about a gall of this Coffee to drink Cold until You get up where the water is fit to drink which is some 20 miles You can now boil the water while the natives are resting, and by applying this Strong article - You have a drink with very little trouble. Cold Coffee will be found an excellent drink through the day No person should drink much of the bad water, Again only three or four should be in one Canoe having three natives to propell it. When You hire the Canoe select one that is long and narrow which lays lowly on the surface of the water Pay the natives one half of the hostage money and no more, give them a little of Your good food but no liquor if You are so unfortunate as to have any - Treat them kindly and remain in the Canoe until You get to Gorgonia dispute their persuasions to get You to walk the last six or eight overland. Some have been lost there more than 36 hours without food or blankets - As soon as You get to Gorgona purchase a ticket at the American Hotel for a bed for this You will have to pay 50 Cts. In the Morning if You have not afforded a Cart of baggage hire a Peon to carry it for You. You will have to pay him

Here is four dollars – Make also a proviso that he shall keep with you all the way – or perhaps he will slip away with your luggage. Now with staff in hand leave Gorgona as soon as five o'clock and walk to the half-way Station thirteen miles before ten o'clk. then lay by until about three in the afternoon – and go through to Panama the same day. You will find here the Aspinwall Hotel the American Hotel, and many others. any of them you will find fit to lodge you for a few nights. Be sure and keep out of the gambling, connected with these houses, if you ever expect to get through to your destination. There is more gambling in Panama than the people in the States have any idea of. From the most authentic sources that I could obtain at Panama it is about 37 miles from Chagres to Gorgona thence 28 miles to Panama, Making not far from 65 miles from Ocean to Ocean the way it is now travelled. By taking the precautions I have simply suggested will save a person many dimes and many miserable refreshments which otherwise they will be obliged to have. By these means a person can keep the expenses for $ 15 to 20 Many however $ 25 or $ 30 These were gents who rode their mules. There is a Lady on board this Ship. Who walked from G to P. She is from Pennsylvania going to Oak to farming

Having procured my ticket upon the Croton for which I paid $ 100 for the Steerage with a written guarantee that I should have Cabin fare by paying the additional sum of forty dollars if I did not like the fare in the steerage. I went on board of the above Ship on Saturday the 27th of March lay the Isle of Tobago Within the Ship had Repaired the day previous to take upon her supplies of fresh water & provisions, Here we had the opportunity of going on Shore and do our washing and procure such fruits as we were disposed to buy, such as pine apples. Oranges, bananas &c. At four o'clock that afternoon we left Tobago. At the time that I am now writing it the 46th day out. We are now in Lat 31° 0' South, Long. 132°, 30' west, having had Calm Weather for the last four days: if we could get a fair wind we could make port in about four days being only 500 miles out, Our Craft has proved a first rate Sailor having come up with quite a number of Vessels and passed them in less than twelve hours. There is two now in sight One of them is the A. W. Griffin which left Panama 10 or 12 days before us the other is so far distant that we can see nothing of her but the Sails. Both of these are dropping behind notwithstanding our light winds. This passage has convinced me that the Pacific can never be successfully navigated with Sailing Vessels

Especially by California Emigrants in this age of Steam. Half one half of our time has been spent in Calm weather. When the broad bosom of this great Ocean was as still as a basin of Water and looked like a liquid mass of Silver. At no time have I seen it but what a common boat would ride on it in perfect security. When we left Panama we took a due west course until we got out to the 108th degree of west longitude and 12th of North Lat., during this time we were down within three degrees of the Equator. On Wednesday the 17th of April in the 108th of West Lat. we took the regular North east or trade winds. Then held us up to the 23rd of N. Lat. and 124th west long. This was on Saturday the 4th of May since then we have been dependant upon Variable Winds for what little progress we have made. This has been generally ahead from the North just where we want to go. There is upwards of an hundred of passengers on board with three Ladies and one little girl. These people are from all parts of the World, Americans, English, French, Irish, Dutch &c. Their intercourse with each other has been very pleasant. the most perfect good feeling has prevailed, no fighting or wrangling during the whole passage

people to have observed however, that much bad feeling has been exhibited by the Steerage passengers towards the Captain because they have had to pay so poorly. Aware at first that the Steerage passengers would get rather light living I paid over the forty dollars and went into the Cabin, where we live well enough. The Steerage passengers do not suffer in reality for the want enough — for this they get — but it's the quality of their food — Stinking beef, hard Sea bread and thick coffee, they say are among the items of their bill of fare, Then has been one thing which Americans, free native born citizens having the privilege of suffrage, boasting themselves of being the most independent people on earth, have been guilty of, that is hanging around the pantry and licking out the plates of the Cabin passengers after they were brought out to be washed. Each of these plates Irishman had just dined, Now it was not because they were hungry, but because the Cabin passengers got a little better dinner Surely a deep Sin all things. Oh how could — Americans consent to degrade themselves thus in the Eyes of so many foreigners! Many I know certainly governed by circumstances. Of the Card playing and those engaged in it I need say nothing. Swearing has so seemed to have become a virtue among the Majority —

Here I have had the opportunity of seeing some of the first fruits of California adventure. Even in the passage from Panama and at Panama commences those immoral practices & gaming which being carried out in Real proves the ruin of so many of the young men who resort to this golden land. It commences first by Card-playing for the purpose of paping away time as they say — they soon become certainly. Almost every one engages in this dandable amusement — little aware where it is to lead them, or into what whirlpool it is about to plunge them. Men have on this ship laid about the decks from morn till noon, and from noon until night playing cards, who would not be seen playing even anything less than a marble centre table at home. From this they increase the interest of the game by cutting checks out of paste board, giving denomination to each one are $2.50 and $1.00 with these they bet as freely as the most expert gamblers. After playing with these until they loose their interest, then they begin by putting up dimes, quarters, and half dollars. In this manner has gambling been carried on from the begining of the passage. Many poor fellows have been entirely cleaned out, as they express it. I had read and heard much of the gaming and the immoral doings carried on in Real, I am fully satisfied that this love of gaming has its origin on the passage from Panama to San francisco.

It Seems as though men loose every moral restraint, and seem to vie with one to see which can sink quickest and lowest into the Sink of iniquity and degridation. It is unnecessary for me to call any names, or to eliminate any one from our quarter as associated with what I have expressed above, Knowing the Sailor You can form Your own conclusions.

In the Torrid Zone we found the heat of course intense, until we got up to the 15° N. of North Latitude, where we found the weather colder and the atmosphere cloudy and quite damp, So much So that overcoats became indespensably necessary. We saw many things thus far to amuse us and to keep up a good cheerful Spirit, among those most conspicuous I will mention the Whale the porpose the dolphin and the horrible Shark. We had a great deal of Sport in catching Some of these noble fish. It was not uncommon on Still Calm mornings to See four or five of these monsters of the deep, playing about in various directions and throwing up the water in great Shots, looking at a distance not unlike a vessel under full Sail.

Porpoises also attracted our attention very particularly, these fish appear to be a migratory Species. The first thing that we see of them is away in the distance coming in large droves leaping out of water at every bound. Over their wake flock vast number of Sea

birds to catch up the smaller fish which they frighten in their tremendous rapidity. These Albatross will weigh from 150 to 300 lbs. To see three or four of these huge black creatures coming right in direction of the Ship, is indeed a grand and imposing scene. We also had a great deal of sport at bird catching. There is constantly following in our track a great number of Sea fowls called the Albatross they are about the size of the goose and perhaps quite as simple. Many of the passengers have been fishing for them daily and some days five or six are taken. They make a tolerably good dish when no other fresh meats are to be had. We most of us slept upon the decks - it being the most comfortable place upon the Ship - till we got up into about the 18th degree of north Lat. After this the weather was rather damp and cold which caused us to retreat down into the hold of the Ship - on to nothing but a board bunk - this was hard enough for us and made our bones ache most shockingly. On Thursday the 7th of May We spoke a barque in Lat. 27.40' Long. 130° 30' from San francisco bound to the Sandwich Isles, five days out, this was on the 40th day out, we now had great hopes of getting into port in five or six days, but of this we were mistaken as you will learn in the sequel. After this we saw vessels almost daily as we had now got in track of those that had come around Cape Horn.

To see a Ship. after having been out for forty or forty-five days, and having had nothing to behold but the dull monotonous never-changing ocean. with its broad expanse stretching far away into the dim horizon—nothing to feast eyes longing eyes upon, but the blue waters beneath and the sun, moon and starry heavens above. with no associations but those of desperate adventures pouring about our little craft in search of some place out of the Sun, or the cold north chilling winds where they can shelter their weary frames— to see a vessel under these circumstances, it is to us like an oasis in the sandy desert to the weary traveller. It gives us new hopes, makes us feel as though we were not entirely deserted by God and man. it bids us keep on, that with our chart and never ceasing to rely so we shall be ultimately reach our destined port. As that noble vessel emerges from out of the distant horizon and presents to view Sail after Sail in their order, then the yards and masts, then the rigging and lastly her dark black looking hull, with its numerous portholes gazing with intense interest upon us, — And now as they catch sight the Stars & Stripes that noble flag

conduct which has sought some of the noblest American that ever lived, and which can never be thrown to the breeze over americans without filling them with feelings of patriotic devotion? must of course fill our eyes with the same feelings, and call forth from them almost involuntarily three hearty good cheers — In Lat 28° 46' we again experienced another change in the wind — it fell off almost to a dead calm, which lasted us for five days, during this time we did not make 30 miles per day. This calm in this latitude was wholly unexpected and something which none of the Seamen who had ever been here before had ever found — We worked gradually with this wind up to the 34° N of North Lat and out to the 134° 12' West Long, being 14° West of San Francisco We had now 4° more Northing to make and about 12° of Easting, or only 480 miles on a direct line — The purpose of running so far West was to get as far North as possible before encountering the heavy north-East winds, which constantly prevail from that quarter, On Saturday the 16th of May We, struck into a fair North east wind which continued to increase until towards night when a heavy squall from the north struck the ship and carried away one of the Stay sails — Changed the wind to the north where it continued

blow with violence for three days, a perfect
contrast to anything which we had before seen upon
the passage. We were now gradually nearing the land
on a southeasterly direction — When within about
150 miles we found the winds becoming calmer
and the Sea smoother. — There was now great excitement
amongst the land lubbers to see land, as it
had been 28 days since we feasted our eyes on
terra-firma, On Saturday the 28th just before
Sunrise, this long wished for privilege was gran-
ted us. The land far away over the leeward of
the bows was seen rising up in a dark
cone-like mountain one of the snow white peaks
of the Sierra Nevada, This of course filled all
with extreme joy. Our destination near at
hand, the golden coast in full view! —
Our interest for the last few days to make
port will be fully apparent when I inform
you that our provisions were almost entirely
exhausted; probably there being not three days
Supply on board; This is most certainly a
position on this Ocean which a very few would
wish to be placed in; for 48 hrs we neared land
it was found that we were yet 30 miles
th of the Bay, and the only way to gain
was by standing out to Sea again,
& they did on the afternoon of Saturday

They Stood out on this course, with a very fresh breeze until midnight. When they tacked and put in for land. They were so fortunate as to hit into the bay this time, but unhappily on the eastern side Close to the land, here the winds which are very treacherous on this Ocean socket us and left us to the mercy of the tide to drift out to sea. On an attempt to anchor on Sunday afternoon they lost one of the anchors — and Every we spent before the tide, out into the Ocean. They now had to again put to Sea to recover it Some three or four miles of Nothing to the opposite Shore — Where we were enabled to drift in with the next flood tide — Monday Morning found us again in the bay, in rather a more favourable position, but with but a very light wind, This is Monday morning that I am writing this — Things look favourable now for leaving at our first favourable opportunity for the last Six or eight days, I have paid particular attention to the State of the weather, I have noticed that the atmosphere has been at Noon very clear over head, With with a dark Mist around the horizon, towards eve it has been generally overcast, and the same in the morn, I've taken the thermometer three times perday, and find 36° has been the lowest & 62° the highest — during this time

Our destined port is at length attained, the western shores of the Pacific are before us After getting fairly in to the narrows of the harbour the breze increased to a very strong gale which drove us up the last six miles in 30 minutes, - as we came up the harbour vast quantities of ducks kept flying before us in long dark dun lines as black as large flocks of tame geese which used to fly in such vast numbers over our towns many Years ago The islands in the harbour appear to be covered with trees, At precisely 2 past two oclock on Monday, they let the anchor drop from our noble bark and in less than five minutes she was as still as her anchor could make her — The custom-house officer was soon along side, after looking over the shipping papers, we were allowed to go on shore soon as we pleased, You may be assured the time was not long before I placed my foot upon tierra-firma, With perhaps as great feelings of pleasure as did Columbus when he discovered the western Continent. Most of my time has been spent since coming here in rambling around to behold the natural scenery of this way and the Manner and customs of the Californians located at this City, an account of which is reserved for a better opportunity at some future time —

I have written this, as a kind of a narrative of the expedition to this country. My object also in writing it was to have it to refere after getting home, as perhaps many things might escape my memory had they not been put upon paper when fresh in the mind. It has been written mostly on board of the vessel bearing surrounded by 50 or 60 passengers. who were engaged in almost every kind of noisy amusement from playing chequers to gambling. Therefore You will find many grammatical errors and some bad spelling. These of course will kindly pass over without any critical notice. I thought when I began to write it, that I would not by any means send it home. but thinking perhaps You might be somewhat amused to get a glimpse of the passage I have concluded to forward it by the express —

I have also appended a few verses of something in the shape of Poetry. Not shape of poetry, I say, because it is written in verse style. that is each line is began with a capital letter and one line between each verse. This is the first effusion of my poetical genius. and doubtless will be the last. You will do me a great favor, by not reading it but burn it as it perhaps might vanish upon a second perusal. With these considerations I remain, Yours Truly —

To Mary

J. D. A. Felton

We are a good jovial band,
From all parts the United States;
And bound for the golden Sand
All in the greatest State.

We left the city of Panama
It was upon a March day
Just on the twenty ninth ah!
The Captain he did say.

Down to Tobago first we sailed.
And then at landing made;
To take upon our water good
And provisions from the shade,

At four o'clock the Mate did say,
All things were well and ready:
When to the breeze our sails were thrown
And we did move quite steady.

We all that night upon the deck,
Did meet to bid Trinidad adieu:
While upon the broad Pacific beat,
Many, many long days should be our due.

The Sabbath Sun rose bright & fair
While on our course the ship did lay -

We had no devine- so our bibles perused
And other good books thro the long days.

Monday came, and through the week,
Our course we held thro Sun and Sours;
When Saturdays Morn the Capt did Speak,
The Isle in view is Corcoys bleak shores.

Where the winds did us forsake,
And left us on a calm smoth sea;
While the tropical Sun did us almost bake
And made us with a steamer to see,

On the Sabbath some did play
Cayernon, Choquers, Cards and dice;
While others swore and cursed the day,
That they agreed to live upon the Corcoys rice,

Monday came again and went,
And we around this isle yet did lay;
When some proposed one them to be sent,
Perchance a wild hog with rifle might slay-

The Capt said Sea, if no winds did appear,
But then he meant me for he looke so queer;
You might have known it was only to appease
Their weary dispositions and put them at ease.

At night the winds did gently breeze
And filled the Sails to our delight;
The heat was so great some wanted to freeze,
But Corcoys gently receeded from Sight.

But Here the week the winds were so calm,
Only two hundred and fifty miles did we make;
Some of the more timid, fair souls, took alarm,
And prophisied of an Allowance all should partake.

But the Sabbath came, that blessed day;
Which by God and Christ was sanctified;
Brought with it a wind, their fears to allay
Heard prayed the Sails of the Ladies pride.

For three short days this wind did hold.
In which we Run many long miles;
This brightened the hopes of the Sailors bold.
And the Ladies put on their most gracious smiles.

In speaking of the Ladies — Dear,
To You I Earnest make known,
We have three gallant ones without a fear.
And one little Miss not quite half grown.

One of these is a fat old Lady,
Bright New Orleans she says the while;
Her husband surely is a Silly Lady,
For at him she constantly Rails.

She says she is a Christian Methodist.
And will not see for man in want,
But Oh Heavens! She leaves the Sick neglected,
Would not care if them grim death should haunt.

She and the Captain were great friends,
And oft in arms would walk the deck;
Her husband swore they should make amends.
Or he would wring her worthless neck.!!!

Poor creature she had now stirred up his ire,
Which before had laid dormant but now was on fire,
She wept, she cried and sore did lament.
That his miserable dream, here she should ferment.

No more will I say of the fat old Lady.
Who by her misconduct Made herself a boobaby;
But leave her in her foolish Blarney
To seek a home in some nook of Castlefarney.

Now you will, I Suppose wish to know,
Something of how we fare on the Croton boat,
It is indeed not much of a heaven below.
Perhaps not so good as Noah's old ark.

There is on here as everywhere else,
Two classes the Proud and the poor;
Passengers of the Steerage dine on the hoof.
The more noble walk in at the Cabin door.

Here they sit down to beef-pork and Fowl,
Occasionly they get a slice of Cold Ham,
Rice and molasses is on high Festival,
While a pudding of Rice follows in Suit.

At Supper we get hot rolls and hard bread,
With tea most vegitterable and horridly strong.
Which nauseates the Stomach, pains also the head,
Upon deck keeps us late, from sleep long long —

We also sleep upon deck, with nothing beneath —
But the soft side of a pitch pine plank —
Pillows have none, because we have no cabin berth,
Indeed it is deplorable and makes us look lank,

Many times in the night do we awake
On account of our hard and inhospitable bed,
A groan is heard oh! how my pain does ache,
Give me oh! give me a place to lay my weary head,

The morning comes and we arise,
With salt water wash our dirty faces,
Seeing cooped up on deck, how greatly we freeze,
Some exercise which we get from a very few paces

At Eight the breakfast bell is pealed —
And down to the table fast they rush —
Of such coffee, never hath Poet sung —
For mortals thought to drink at a gush.

We find our company is composed
Of a very heterogenious mass —
Some from Europe it is supposed
Others are of a different class.

New England is well represented,
Ohio Sends many, many noble Sons,
New York some hard boys has presented,
While Louisenia beats all by tons.

¶ We have a Maxwell from St. Louis,
Who has on board many things to Sell —
His goods were stolen or he is spurious,
My goods are gone, he sorrowfully doth tell.

His brandy, gin and all his liquors,
Poor poisonous stuff as all doth know,
He sold it for one dollar per bottle
And put it down in the hole below.

The New York boy with sweet in hand,
Came upon deck and did him command:
Appear before the Judge and there Commence
Suit for selling goods without license;

The poor fellow was much scared:
Down to the hole he quickly repaired;
When up he came with liquor in hand,
Here boys is jag for your bold command.

¶ We have an old man his name is Foley
He is over fifty Lord bless his poor Soul;
They say he is down when he's at home;
Of some good Church in New York Standing alone.

But then poor man what a horrible plight,
He had got into the company of Thos Donnelly.
He has been gambling, and lost much money,
How his friends will sigh for so foolish a dummy.

There is three men in a bad condition,
They poor souls quite sick have to
On the deck they can't
And Ned Leds over they to'n

Caught the fever in Panama,
and has got the ague and shakes;
Care is poor for want of the means;
The Doctor has dosed the enough to kill Jakes.

Now when three weeks were we out,
A drove of porpise come about;
The Mate with harpoon in his hand,
Upon the deck did firmly stand.

When close to the ship one did appear,
The harpoon he threw which caused a chase.
It entered his body just back of the neck;
With a hearty good shout they pulled it on deck.

His liver and heart they quickly tore out.
From spek eating there's no fear of the gout,
These for our breakfast they quickly did cook.
A record of this you'll find in the log book.

Oh thou great and majestic Ocean
Which had for ages been undisturbed;
Upon thy broad and peaceful bosom
Shall float navies yet untold,

The panting Engine yet shall laugh,
Thunders from Shore to Shore;
Up to its isles shall bow,
[illegible]

The heathen nations on Asias coast
Of Americans yet shall learn
The glad tidings of the gospel
To their millions yet unborn.

Thy noble isles shall be reclaimed
From their rude and barbirous foes;
The ground shall produce like a garden,
The wilderness blossom as the rose.

The Mahoman shall no longer pursue,
His great and powerful prey;
But on Californias golden coast,
Shall dig his owner fur day.

Here now I must bid you adieu,
Hoping Your Studies You will closely pursue
That in a few years, if my time will employ
To meet You all in good Spirits and health of Joy.